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THE BELMONT WAY.

August Belmont.

In pushing the Steinway tunnel to completion in spite of legal obstacles the Belmont interests have virtually defied the city. They have exhibited remarkable audacity. Yet one cannot but admire the energy they have shown.

The Legislature has refused to patch up the company's outworn charter. The Rapid Transit Commission has withheld consent to a new franchise. The City Club has fought the progress of the enterprise, the Borough President has revoked construction permits, the Fire Commissioner has withdrawn blasting permits, the Mayor has directed the Corporation Counsel to test the company's standing in the courts.

Yet the building of the tunnel has gone on under double shifts and the city's opposition been ignored as of no consequence. While on Nov. 29 last only 72 feet of soil had been excavated in Forty-second street, now the tunnel is practically completed from Fourth avenue to the East River and 30 feet beyond the pier line. A terminal site has been acquired opposite the Grand Central Station. On Sept. 1, 1907, it is expected that Long Island cars will be running on this route to a subway connection in the heart of Manhattan.

Mr. Belmont appears to have gone about this work as he went about the work of laying an express track on the Third avenue elevated. What he wanted he took, leaving the court consequences to the lawyers. It may be corporation buccaneering, but it is a useful quality in getting things done. If the city had some of it at its disposal we should not have the spectacle of the Manhattan Bridge only begun after six years of delay. We should not have had the subway connecting loops held up until a makeshift elevated line became a necessity.

THE BALLOON FAD.

The all-night balloon trip of Dr. Julian Thomas and Charles Levee involved an element of personal risk which gave it a distinction over ordinary ascensions. To ride through the upper strata of clouds, with a thunderstorm raging below and under conditions inviting a repetition of Nocquet's fate, called for courage.

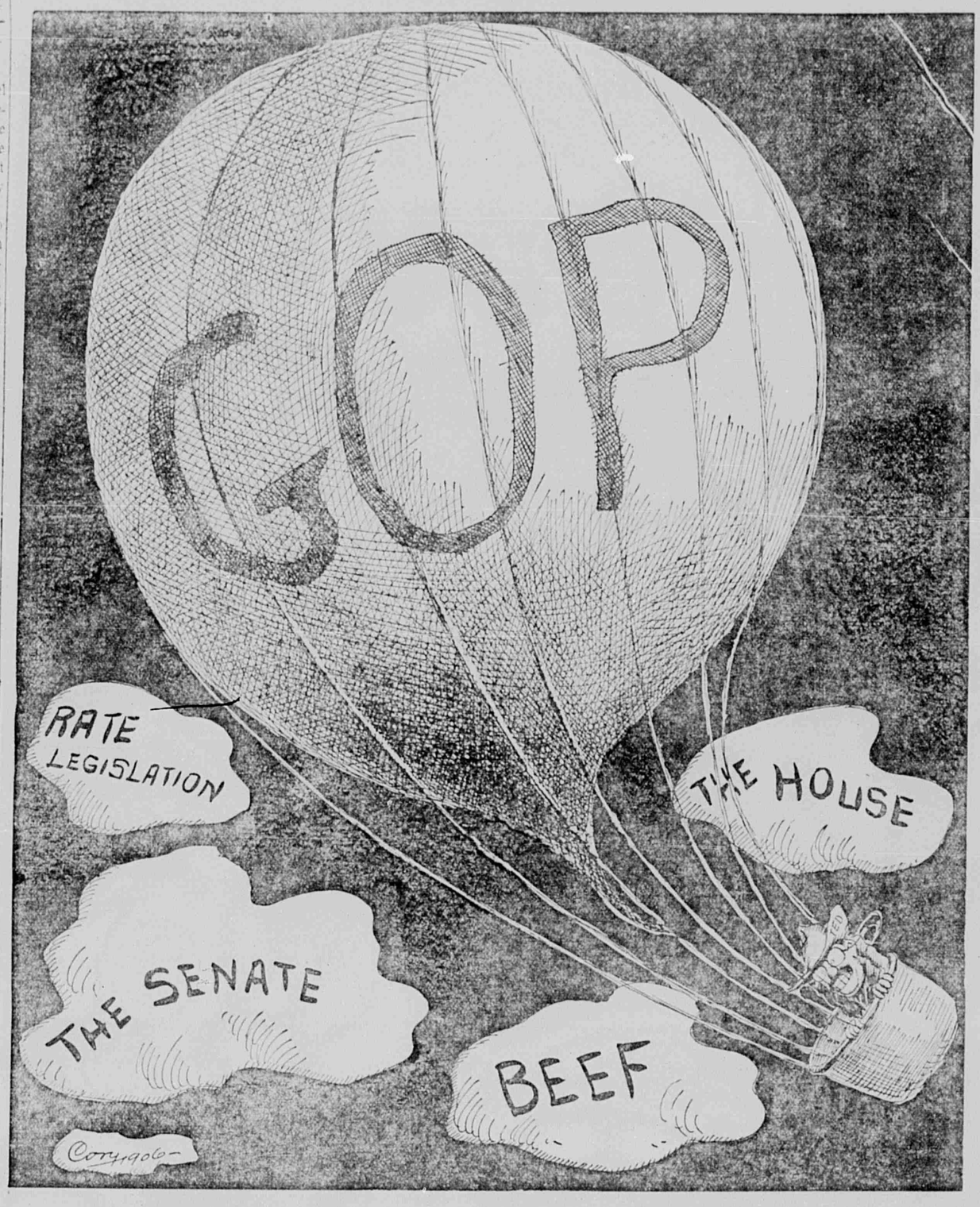
But beyond the danger incurred what did the venture demonstrate? In what respect, except in the better facilities the makers of balloons provide for an ascent, has the aeronaut improved over the Fourth of July ascension of half a century ago? He is still behind Baldwin and the parachute exhibitions at Coney Island in the nineties. To go back to the birth of the sport, in what particular did the journey surpass Blanchard's trip across the English Channel 120 years ago? Considered as a challenge of death, that was as daring an aerial exploit as has ever been attempted.

By a dirigible balloon such as that in which Knabenshue circled over New York's housetops and by experiments of the Santos-Dumont order some progress, however slight, is accomplished in the navigation of the air. But between a gas-inflated balloon, which is the sport of every wind, and the hot-air bags of the Montgolfiers there is only the difference of more workmanlike construction.

The present interest in ballooning as a polite amusement attended by physical hazard makes it a fad of much the same character as polo or automobile speeding. It provides a new sensation and attracts the limelight. But there is nothing in it from which science is likely to profit.

The Aeronaut.

By J. Campbell Cory.



Why the United States Is What It Is To-Day.

FOOTSTEPS OF OUR ANCESTORS IN A SERIES OF THUMBNAIL SKETCHES.

What They Did;
Why They Did It:
What Came Of It.

By Albert Payson Terhune.

No. 40--THE MEXICAN WAR.

THIRTY years had passed since the close of the war of 1812. In that time minor conflicts with various Indian tribes had occurred now and then, and there had been an occasional rumor of impending foreign wars. But on the whole the thirty year era had been one of peace and of national prosperity.

Great men had risen, the nation had grown, and new complications had been bred of new conditions. Daniel Webster, Henry Clay, John C. Calhoun and other mighty statesmen had made their genius felt as world influences. States had been added to the Union, and the wave of civilization had rolled westward even to the Pacific. Slavery had become a live issue, and secession had been more than hinted at. These two themes which were destined later to rend the Republic for four long years were even then assuming terrifying importance.

Then, three decades after the hostilities of 1812, came a new national war. James K. Polk, of Tennessee, had just been inaugurated President, when, on July 4, 1845, Texas was admitted as a State. Texas was formerly a part of the old Mexico conquered by Cortez in the sixteenth century. When, in 1824, Mexico became a republic under Generals Victoria and Santa Ana, it was divided into states, of which Texas was one.

Texas Becomes a State and Causes War.

By 1833 there were 10,000 Americans living in Texas, and these rebelled vigorously against the arbitrary rule of Santa Ana. Feuds and fights followed, in which frontiersmen like Bowie and Davy Crocket won fame. Under Gen. Houston the Americans held their own, broke away from the Mexican yoke and made Texas a republic.

The foremost nations of Europe had acknowledged Texan independence, so when, in 1845, the little republic decided to become one of the United States, Mexico had apparently no logical cause for objection. But such objection was promptly made.

The Northern States, too, objected, on the ground that it would probably mean the creation of a new "slave State," and would cause war with Mexico. Both surmises were correct. The Mexican Minister at Washington demanded his passports, and filed a formal protest against the annexation. President Herera of Mexico issued a "Proclamation of Rights" which practically amounted to a declaration of war. Nor were these the sole reasons for the breach. For years Mexicans had plundered United States ships in the Gulf and had confiscated Americans' property throughout the borders of Mexico. So there was little love lost between the two countries.

President Polk sent Zachary Taylor to defend Texas. Taylor not only did so, but conquered northern Mexico as well. A United States squadron under Commodore Conner was sent into the Gulf. Congress voted $10,000,000 as a war fund and authorized the raising of 50,000 volunteers. A fleet was sent to attack Mexico's Pacific coast, while two armies were marshalled to invade the country from different points.

Gen. Winfield Scott, "The Hero of Lundy's Lane," was commander-in-chief of the United States armies. In March, 1847, he captured Vera Cruz, and marched on with 8,500 men to Cerro Gordo, where, on April 8, he met an army of 12,000 under Gen. Santa Ana and won a brilliant victory.

He sent a request for more troops, but none was forwarded to him. So he pressed forward with such force as he had and, on Sept. 14, seized the City of Mexico, thus breaking the backbone of the Mexico power.

Meantime the "Army of the West," under Gen. Stephen W. Kearny, of New Jersey, invaded New Mexico, where it met with no resistance, and on Aug. 1, 1847, took peaceable possession of that territory.

California was a Mexican possession, and became the object of a joint attack by sea and by land.

Col. John C. Fremont, prince of pioneers, pushed through the country with a gallant handful of followers, who swelled in numbers as they advanced. They swept aside every opposition, crossing California without encountering any successful hindrance.

Commodore Robert Stockton, son of the New Jersey Chief Justice who had suffered martyrdom for signing the Declaration of Independence, sailed along the California coast, carrying all before him and gallantly earning his later popular title of "Conqueror of California." He was a veteran of the war of 1812, where he had won fame for dashing bravery in naval conflicts.

On Aug. 17 Stockton and Fremont met at Los Angeles, having between them subdued the entire great province. Thus, Robert Stockton, aristocrat and John C. Fremont, man of the people, share jointly in the honor of winning for the United States one of our greatest and richest possessions.

Col. Doniphan, of Kearny's army, had, in the meanwhile, gone with 1,000 men to join Gen. Wool in Mexico. On Dec. 22, 1846, he had met a Mexican army of 2,000, defeated it and killed 200. On Feb. 28, 1847, he encountered 4,000 Mexicans near Chihuahua, put them to rout, and captured the city. The Mexicans in this fight lost 600 men. Doniphan lost 18.

The United States Everywhere Victorious.

All Mexico was thus subdued. The war had been of but little more than two years' duration and had consisted of a practically unbroken series of triumphs for the United States. Everywhere the American forces had been successful, even as they had been against the Algerines, and were in our late war with Spain. The only power that has ever met with any degree of success in war against the United States is England.

When Anglo-Saxon meets Anglo-Saxon stubborn resistance may always be expected. But American soldiers found no difficulty whatsoever in putting to rout Mexican armies of three and even four times their own numbers.

The Mexican war was at an end. Texas was a State of the Union. California was taken. Among the many officers who had won distinction in Mexico were two young Captains—Ulysses S. Grant, of Taylor's army, and William T. Sherman, who had followed Kearny. Both were destined to put to tremendous use the early training thus acquired.

For another period of fourteen years our country was to enjoy peace—a peace that was but the forerunner of the most tragic and terrible war in the history of the world.

The Masquerader by Katherine Cecil Thurston

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CHAPTER XXIX.

LODER'S frame of mind as he left Cadogan Gardens was peculiar. Once more he was living in the present—the forceful, exhilarating present, and the knowledge braced him. Upon one point his mind was satisfied. Lillian Astrupp had found the telegram, and it remained to him to render her find valueless. How he proposed to do this, how he proposed to come out triumphant in face of such a situation, was a matter that as yet was shapeless in his mind; nevertheless the danger—the sense of impending conflict—had a savor of life after the inaction of the day and night just passed. Chilcote in his weakness and his entanglement had turned to him; and he in his strength and capacity had responded to the appeal.

His step was firm and his bearing assured as he turned into Grosvenor Square and walked toward the familiar house.

The habit of self-deceit is as insidious and tenacious as any vice. For one moment on the night of his great speech, as he leaned out of Chilcote's carriage and met Chilcote's eyes, Loder had seen himself—and under the shock of revelation had taken decisive action. But in the hours subsequent to that action the plausible, inner voice had whispered unceasingly, soothing his wounded self-esteem, rebuilding stone by stone the temple of his egotism, until at last when Chilcote, panic-stricken at his own action, had burst into his rooms ready to plead or to coerce, he had found no need for either coercion or entreaty. By a power more subtle and effective than any at his command Loder had been prepared for his coming—unconsciously ready with an acquiescence before his appeal had been made. It was the fruit of this preparation, the inevitable outcome of it, that strengthened his step and steadied his hand as he mounted the steps and opened the hall door of Chilcote's house on that eventful afternoon.

The dignity, the air of quiet solidity, impressed him as it never failed to do, as he crossed the large hall and ascended the stairs—the same stairs that he had passed down almost as an outcast not so many hours before. He was filled with the sense of things regained; belief in his own star lifted him as it had done a hundred times before in these same surroundings.

He quickened his steps as the sensation came to him. Then reaching the head of the stairs he turned directly toward Eve's sitting-room and, gaining the door, knocked. The strength of his eagerness, the quick beating of his pulse as he waited for a response, surprised him. He had told himself many times that his passion, however strong, would never again conquer as it had done two nights ago—and the fact that he had come thus candidly to Eve's room was to his mind a proof that temptation could be dared. Nevertheless there was something disconcerting to a strong man in this merely physical perturbation; and when Eve's voice came to him, giving permission to enter, he paused for an instant to steady himself; then with sudden decision he opened the door and walked into the room.

The blinds were partly drawn, there was a scent of violets in the air and a fire glowed warmly in the grate. He noted these things carefully, telling himself that a man should always be alertly sensible of his surroundings; then all at once the nice balancing of detail suddenly gave way. He forgot everything but the one circumstance that Eve was standing in the window—her back to the light, her face toward him. With his pulses beating faster and an unsteady sensation in his brain he moved forward, holding out his hand.

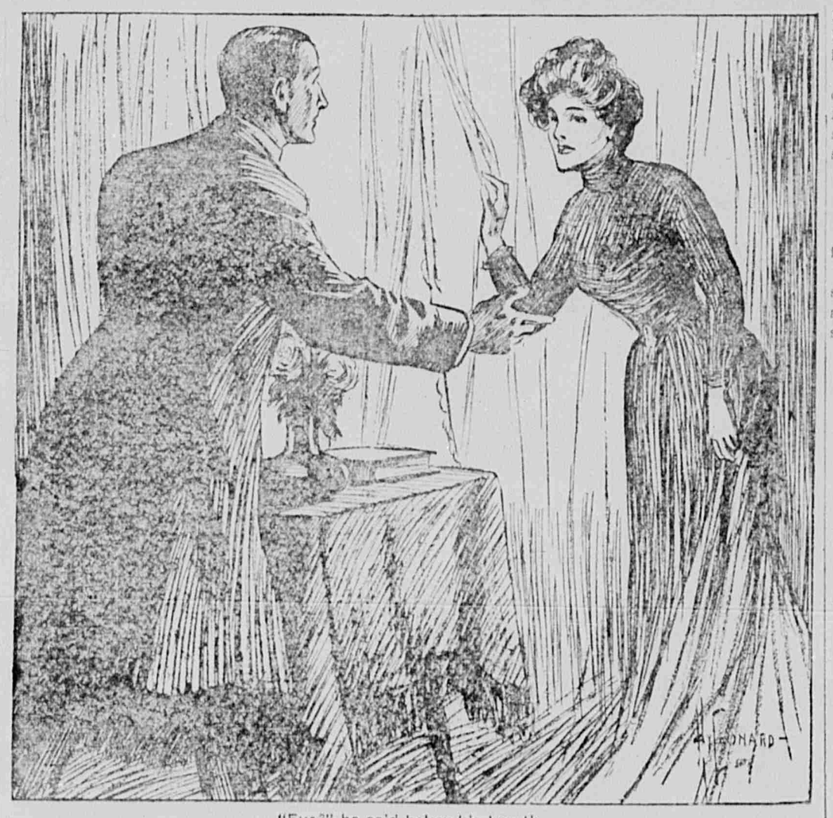
"Eve?"— he said below his breath.

But Eve remained motionless. As he came into the room she had glanced at him—a glance of quick, searching question; then with equal suddenness she had averted her eyes. As he drew close to her now she remained immovable.

"Eve"— he said again, "I wanted to see you—I wanted to explain about yesterday and about this morning." He paused, suddenly disturbed. The full remembrance of the scene in the brougham had surged up at sight of her—had risen a fierce, unquenchable recollection. "Eve"— he began again in a new, abrupt tone,

And then it was that Eve showed herself in a fresh light. From his entrance into the room she had stayed motionless save for her first glance of acute inquiry, but now her demeanor changed. For almost the first time in Loder's knowledge of her the vitality and force that he had vaguely apprehended below her quiet, serene exterior sprang up like a flame within whose radius things are illuminated. With a quick gesture she turned toward him, her warm color deepening, her eyes suddenly alight.

"I understand," she said, "I understand. Don't try to explain! Can't you see that it's enough to



"Eve?" he said below his breath.

—to see you as you are?"——

Loder was surprised. Remembering their last passionate scene and the damper Chilcote's subsequent presence must inevitably have cast upon it he had expected to be doubtfully received; but the reality of the reception left him bewildered. Eve's manner was not that of the ill-used wife; its vehemence, its note of desire and depreciation, were more suggestive of his own ardent seizing of the present as distinguished from past or future. With an odd sense of confusion he turned to her afresh.

"Then I am forgiven?" he said. And unconsciously, as he moved nearer, he touched her arm. At his touch she started. All the yielding sweetness, all the submission that had marked her two nights ago was gone; in its place she was possessed by a curious excitement that stirred while it perplexed.

Loder, moved by the sensation, took another step forward. "Then I am forgiven?" he repeated more softly.

Her face was averted as he spoke, but he felt her arm quiver, and when at last she lifted her head their eyes met. Neither spoke, but in an instant Loder's arms were round her.

For a long, silent space they stood holding each other closely. Then with a sharp movement Eve freed herself. Her color was still high, her eyes still peculiarly bright, but the bunch of violets she had worn in her belt had fallen to the ground.

"John"— she said quickly; but on the word her breath caught. With a touch of nervousness she stooped to pick up the flowers.

Loder noticed both voice and gesture. "What is it?" he said. "What were you going to say?"

But she made no answer. For a second longer she searched for the violets; then, as he bent to assist her, she stood up quickly and laughed—a short, embarrassed laugh.

"How absurd and nervous I am!" she exclaimed. "Like a schoolgirl instead of a woman of twenty-four. You must help me to be sensible." Her cheeks still burned, her manner was still excited, like one who holds an emotion or an impulse at bay.

Loder looked at her uncertainly. "Eve"— he began afresh with his odd, characteristic perseverance, but she instantly checked him. There was a finality, a faint suggestion of fear, in her protest.

"Don't!" she said. "Don't! I don't want explanations. I want to—to enjoy the moment without having things analyzed or smoothed away. Can't you understand? Can't you see that I'm wonderfully, terribly happy to—to have you—as you are!" Again her voice broke—a break that might have been a laugh or a sob.

(To Be Continued.)